



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

**Fish and Wildlife Service**

For release November 29, 1991

Patricia W. Fisher 202-208-5634

### PROPOSALS SUBMITTED FOR 1992 CITES CONFERENCE

Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan today announced that new proposals to regulate the commerce of plants and animals around the world are being submitted to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

The Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently submitted the United States' species listing proposals and implementation resolutions to the CITES Secretariat in Switzerland in preparation for the biennial meeting of CITES countries to be held next March in Kyoto, Japan. With 112 member countries, CITES is the world's most widely accepted conservation agreement. Party nations work together to regulate commerce in species affected due to trade.

"This Administration considers CITES vital to forging worldwide cooperation in conserving the world's irreplaceable animal and plant resources," Service Director John Turner said. "Our submissions for the upcoming CITES meeting reflect this country's commitment to preserving global biodiversity through the monitoring and regulation of international trade in species. This is to ensure healthy wild populations are maintained in the future."

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For the upcoming session, the United States is proposing several plants and animals for inclusion on CITES Appendices I and II. Appendix I contains species threatened with extinction that either are or may be affected by trade. Commercial trade in wild specimens of these species is prohibited.

Through its Appendix II listings, CITES regulates commerce in animals and plants that may become threatened unless trade control is practiced.

Among the species proposed are:

**Appendix I--**The Goffin's cockatoo, the blue-streaked lory (bird), and the bog turtle were proposed because these animals are considered threatened with extinction due to restricted habitat and their popularity as pets. The blue-fronted Amazon parrot was proposed because the large number being exported is contributing to population decline. Also proposed was the paddlefish, whose roe (eggs) represents the main source of exported American caviar.

**Appendix II--**American mahogany, queen conch, the wood turtle, the Venus flytrap, and the eastern Caribbean population of the rough-barked lignum vitae (a small tree) have been proposed for Appendix II because trade may be contributing to population losses. The Venus flytraps commonly offered for retail sale grow in the wild and are collected primarily in North Carolina. The proposed listing is to protect this population from depletion due to high demand abroad. In the case of conch shells, negative impacts due to collecting are a factor. A listing on this Appendix will require exporting countries to ensure that the species are being properly managed.

The African Goliath frog, the world's largest species of frog, was proposed for Appendix II because it is rare, has a very restricted range, and is collected for use in frog jumping contests.

The United States has proposed moving the Mexican bobcat from Appendix I to Appendix II and removing completely from CITES Appendices the Northern elephant seal, harlequin quail, and U.S. populations of pronghorn antelope.

The second portion of the United States' submission deals with resolutions. These resolutions deal with the interpretation of the CITES Convention and are important in helping countries better carry out the Convention. Resolutions also provide a forum for a biennial evaluation of critical wildlife trade issues. Key resolutions proposed by the United States for the upcoming session include two concerning trade in birds and one seeking a universal identification tagging system for crocodilian skins.

There is a serious concern worldwide that international trade in wild-caught birds is contributing to a decline among some species. However, in order to determine which species are being harmed by trade, more scientific information must be gathered. The United States has submitted a resolution to suspend commerce in heavily traded wild bird species while member nations conduct scientific studies and implement measures to ensure that any future trade in those species will be sustainable.

In addition, because many bird species suffer high mortality due to transport, the United States has put forth a resolution to suspend commercial trade in the most adversely affected species and to limit the number of birds per shipment for other impacted species.

Another United States resolution focuses attention on the large-scale illegal trade in crocodilian skins (alligators, crocodiles, caimans, etc.) worldwide. Each year, hundreds of thousands of illegal skins are traded internationally, which threatens many populations and seriously affects efforts by some countries to manage these species on a sustainable basis. Australia has joined the United States in a submission requesting the current U.S. system of requiring tags on all American alligator skins be extended to the marking of all crocodilian skins in international trade.

The Service plans to publish a Federal Register notice in December announcing species proposed and resolutions submitted by other member nations. The notice will present the United States' proposed position on these issues, call for public comment, and announce the date for a public meeting to be held in Washington, DC, on the issues. Final United States negotiating positions for the meeting will be published in the Federal Register during February 1992.